

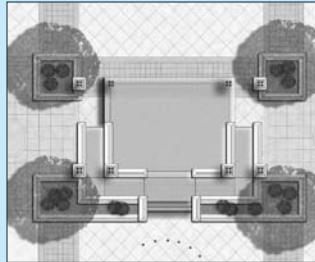
## Tribute to William Gibbs Focus of New Art Project

A tribute honoring the life and work of William Gibbs will be the subject of one of two new art projects the City will pursue to enhance the new Rockville Town Square development.

The City's Planning Commission, with the endorsement of the Mayor and Council, previously approved naming one of the two new streets in Town Center after Gibbs. However, as the accomplishments of Gibbs have become more known, the Mayor and Council expressed interest in devoting one of nine art projects to him.

At their meeting of Aug. 7, the Mayor and Council gave approval for the Cultural Arts Commission, in concurrence with the City's Department of Recreation of Parks, to solicit artists to create an art project honoring Gibbs. The project will have a budget of \$75,000 and will be installed on the west-facing façade walls of the Town Center plaza pavilion stage. These two walls, each about 10 feet in length and about three feet high, will face Gibbs Street.

The project will reflect on the life of Gibbs, who worked with Thurgood Marshall, a lawyer for the NAACP, during segregation to gain equal pay for teachers and administrators at Montgomery County schools for minorities. The case is believed to have helped Marshall to eventually be-



*A new stage that is part of the plaza in Rockville Town Square will host concerts and performances for passers by. The area also will feature artwork that will honor William Gibbs, a champion for African-American civil rights in Rockville. At left is a sketched view of the stage from above. The middle photo shows a low wall behind the stage that might be created as a tribute to Gibbs.*

will be part of Town Square, which will be a mix of residential, retail, restaurant, office and cultural uses. The first buildings of the project are scheduled to open later this year, including the new Rockville Library, but the project's grand opening is scheduled for spring 2007.

On June 12, the Mayor and Council approved proposals for five of the art projects and rejected proposals for three others (the ninth project is not yet ready for consideration). However, on Aug. 7, the Mayor and Council approved the recommendation to again pursue the project along Gibbs Street called "Things Left Behind."

The City will once more solicit artists for "Things Left Behind." This process will target "artists who are capable of creating small objects in bronze and other durable materials."

The renewed idea was to enhance the pedestrian area along Gibbs Street with a series of objects. The budget for this project remains at \$40,000.

John Moser, chair of the Cultural Arts Commission, said the new solicitation would be very specific in materials that could be used and the size of the six to eight objects that should be created.

"We think this will add a light touch to Town Center," said Moser. "It will have a happy tone." ■

come a Supreme Court Justice.

"Whatever we do here, I want it to be so 'in your face' that you can't help but learn about what William Gibbs

did," said Mayor Larry Giammo. "I want it to be so prominent that you could not avoid it."

There will be nine art projects that

## Think Before Flushing Discarded Items Could End Up on Cameras

Sometimes it seems like a good idea to flush an unwanted item down the toilet. But workers in charge of maintaining Rockville's sewer lines will tell you first hand they do not want to find it.

"If you can think of it, it's been found," said Brian Plymale, a utilities crew supervisor with Rockville's Department of Public Works. "You can find anything in the sewer lines—dish rags, towels, needles, rocks, potato chip bags, cell phones and jewelry. Anything. If it's there, it will get found."

It will get found thanks to one of the newest additions to the City's Public Works tool box.

Approximately three months ago, the City purchased an improved camera truck to record damage and blockages to City sewer lines. The City previously had an older version of a camera truck, but with the updated technology, crews have the ability to send the video camera directly into the sewer main, record images and download them onto a hard drive for closer evaluation.

Before cameras that could investigate a sewer line, if a problem was suspected,

crews were forced to dig up the line, damaging the street. Those efforts sometimes proved to be wasted excavations, especially if the problem was not identified or identified in its entirety. Now, problems are identified more easily and efficiently.

"A lot of jurisdictions contract out that kind of work," Plymale said. "We have our own camera truck, so it's an overall cost savings for us."

All who take care of Rockville's sewers agree that the No. 1 enemy of free-flowing and environmentally sound sewers is grease.

"Grease is the worst thing people can put down the drain," said Bob Valentine, an operations maintenance assistant superintendent with the City. "It clogs up the drains. Everyone can help just by keeping a container near their kitchen sinks and putting every type of grease in that container. When it cools down, put it in your regular trash—just do not put it down the drain."

The City constantly is doing maintenance on sewer lines, flushing them and using chemicals. Valentine said even those efforts only minimize problems that, in an average year, could result in six to eight



*Fixing a sewer line requires significant work from members of the City of Rockville's Department of Public Works. Often, the sewer may be more than five feet underground, requiring the use of special equipment to dig into the ground. The walls of the hole must then be secured so it is safe for workers to enter the large opening without the risk of the dirt collapsing around them. Then crew members enter the hole and cut the part of the line that is causing problems, remove it, and replace it with a new segment of pipe. No matter what the weather, crew members work to ensure Rockville's sewer and water lines work properly.*

major blockages in City-maintained sewer lines.

With all of the potential problems in sewer mains, crews could use all the help they can get.

The camera truck can identify problems within minutes of sending in the camera, saving workers time in repairing problems. It is a technology that is improving service for everyone in Rockville. ■

## Rec and Parks Projects

### GENERAL PROJECTS

**Asphalt/Concrete Improvements** • Partial replacement of asphalt walking path to and around tennis court in Horizon Hill Park

**Bikeway Route Signs** • Installation of signs along designated Bike Routes • Project will be awarded in September and installation is expected to be completed in November • This project is partially funded by National Recreational Trails Program

**Civic Center Long Range Plan** • Feasibility study to identify adequate and accessible parking, vehicular and pedestrian access and stormwater management on the Civic Center grounds has been completed • Plan is currently in the review process • The implementation or construction of this project is funded in Fiscal Year 2010

**Dog Park** • Design has been incorporated into Mattie J. T. Stepanek Park • Construction of this project is underway and is expected to be completed in the fall • Rockville Dog Owners Group (RDOG) continues to participate in the process

**Gude Drive Facility Improvements** • Modernization and expansion of the City's Public Works and Parks maintenance complex in four phases • Project has been postponed due to budget constraints

**I-270/Route 28 Bike/Pedestrian Bridge** • Separate bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists parallel to Route 28 on south side across I-270 to connect Hurley Avenue and Nelson Street bikeways

• TEA-21 grant for \$3,771,190 received from State Highway Administration • Construction began in spring and is expected to take 18 months

**King Farm Farmstead** • Courtesy review by Historic District Commission completed • Reconstruction of hay drying shed to begin this fall

**Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park** • Phase I – Construction is underway • Expected completion this fall • Beginning of Phase II – Construction is expected to begin late fall • Design of Phase III begins this fall

**Playground Equipment Improvements** • Fallsgrove Park equipment to be installed in the fall • Land transfer from developer to City has been completed • Stepanek Park equipment installation scheduled for fall • Hillcrest and Silver Rock Parks equipment has been designed and the bid will be awarded by the Mayor and Council in September

**Rockville Municipal Swim Center Meeting/Fitness Room** • Design of facility has begun • Construction of facility is funded in Fiscal Year 2008

**Thomas Farm Community Center** • Architect working on detail designs due this fall • Construction is expected to begin this winter

**Urban Forest Renewal** • Removal of aging and hazardous trees in Twinbrook, Fallsmead, Potomac Woods and other neighborhoods is ongoing • Replacement plantings take place each spring and fall

## Public Works Projects

### TRANSPORTATION

**Bike/Pedestrian Improvements** • Eight pedestrian signals with countdown LED lenses were installed at the intersection of Route 28 and Great Falls Road

**Bus Shelters** • Additional shelter installation locations being determined this fall

**Sidewalk Installation** • Beall Avenue from 355 to Nelson Street • Design for sidewalk on north side of street underway • Funding for construction is being sought from state or other means • Lynch Street from Beall Avenue to Anderson Avenue and Calvin Lane near Meadow Hall Elementary • Construction scheduled for late summer • Argyle Street at Maryland Avenue to Monroe Street • Construction tentatively scheduled to begin in fall

**Fallsgrove Developer-Funded Transportation Improvements** • Majority of the projects are complete • Remaining projects include expansion of I-270 ramp to Shady Grove Road

**Red Light Cameras** • The installation of two new red light cameras along Maryland 28 in Town Center (East-bound Maryland 28 at South Washington Street and West-bound Maryland Route 28 at Maryland Avenue) is complete

**Slower Speeds for Safer Schools** • Ritchie Park Elementary and Meadow Hall Elementary Schools will continue to participate in the 15-mph speed limit program for the 2006-07 school year • College Gardens Elementary School also will continue to participate in the program when school renovations are complete in September 2007 • Staff is evaluating expanding the program

existing and potential park amenities, such as shade trees, park shelter building, playgrounds and basketball courts • A meeting will be held at the Senior Center on Thursday, Sept. 21, at 7 p.m., to review concept designs and discuss layout and pond design issues with city staff, a park designer and the engineering and architectural consultants

**Drainage Improvement at Longwood/Pinewood Intersection** • Design is underway to relieve occasional street flooding during major rainstorms • Construction is planned for this fall

**Maryvale SWM and Park Improvements** • Existing dual-use ballfield/SWM facility will be modified to create a separate soccer field and stormwater marsh • Design is ongoing • Construction is planned for winter 2006-07

**RedGate Golf Course Stormwater Management Retrofits** • Modify existing SWM facilities and improve 600 feet of stream in Rock Creek drainage area • Construction is substantially complete with only minor work remaining

**Rockcrest Stream Improvement** • 1,600 feet of stream restoration in the Rock Creek watershed is being designed • Construction is planned for September

### UTILITIES

**Adclare Water Main Replacement** • Approximately 1,500 feet of six-inch water main under Adclare Road and will be replaced with eight-inch water main • Design is complete • Construction is planned for September/October

**Evans Street Sewer** • Sewer replacement for approximately 300 feet of six-inch PVC sewer at 110 and 112 Evans Street is substantially complete with only restoration issues remaining

**Sewer Rehabilitation** • Sewer evaluation survey, including flow monitoring and video inspection of underground piping for the southeastern area of Twinbrook has been completed • Rehabilitation is complete with only minor work remaining

### WATER IMPROVEMENTS

**Glen Mill Pump Station** • Project will provide the additional pumping capacity needed to provide sufficient water supply to the entire Rockville water system • Completion scheduled for fall

**Lewis Avenue Water Main** • Upgrade 4,600 feet of 8-inch water main to 12-inch water main from Broadwood Drive to Halpine Road • Design is ongoing • Construction is planned for spring 2007

**Horizon Hills Water Mains** • The condition of water mains in this area is being assessed • Water mains in some streets may need to be replaced

**Water Treatment Plant** • Major upgrade in the treatment plant to support a maximum daily production of 14 million gallons is essentially complete • Construction of covers over the filter wells is complete • An emergency generator has been added • Improvements to sludge handling facilities are being studied



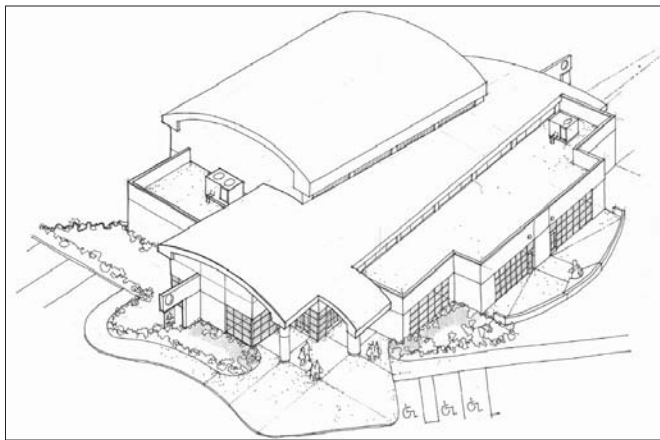
Photo Credit: Town Courier Newspaper

**'DON'T RUN, APPEAR AGGRESSIVE'** ... Residents of the Fallsgrove and Potomac Woods areas will see some new additions to their neighborhoods, in the form of green coyote signs, giving directions on what to do if one is spotted. Coyotes are living in the area, and City officials want to provide residents with as much information as possible if they happen to see one.

The signs are a follow up to brochures that were mailed to homeowners in the corporate City limits to educate residents on how to co-exist with coyotes.

The new coyote signs say, "Be aware of your surroundings; keep pets on a leash; appear aggressive; don't run; do not feed wildlife; report sightings to Rockville Police."





The Thomas Farm Center will be the first City community center west of I-270.

## Energy Efficiency a Goal For Thomas Farm City Using Geothermal Testing In Hope of Making Community Center More Sustainable

City residents west of I-270 will soon have a community center located in their area to work out at, play sports and games, take classes and many other activities.

Construction is expected to begin this winter, and if current tests prove favorable, the approximately 17,000-square-foot building will be as sustainable as possible — or in other words, “eco-friendly.”

The City has conducted geothermal testing on the land to see how likely it will be to use the earth as an energy source, which will cut back on the amount of fossil fuel required to operate such a facility. City officials are awaiting results of the tests to determine the possibilities.

“We are hoping the test for geothermal wells come back positive so we can use this technology — along with other meth-

ods — to make the building as sustainable as possible,” said Chris Henry, Recreation and Parks administration manager.

Residents can expect a gymnasium, multipurpose rooms, a fitness center, kitchenette, vending machines, locker rooms, offices, storage and a parking lot.

The building will be located on Falls Grove Drive at the intersection of West Montgomery Avenue. Construction is expected to begin in the winter of 2007, once final drawings are submitted for construction bidding. The project should take about one year to complete.

The project has been delayed somewhat as the City works with TransCo regarding a gas line through the property. The City also is working with the developer to see through a land transfer. Once the geothermal test results are received, the City will report back to the Mayor and Council with the findings. ■

## Slower Speeds Program Back at Rockville Schools

Last spring, the City of Rockville’s Department of Public Works teamed up with the City’s Police Department to initiate a program that would increase pedestrian safety around public schools in the Rockville.

The “Slower Speeds for Safer Schools” pilot program was tried around three City elementary schools from January through June with favorable results.

Those results encouraged continuation of the pilot program this fall at Ritchie Park and Meadow Hall elementary schools. College Gardens Elementary School, the third school that was the subject of the spring pilot, is closed this year as it undergoes major renovations. It is expected that the Slower Speeds program will resume there when the school reopens.

The Slower Speeds program established speed limit zones of 15 miles per hour on roads adjacent to the pilot schools in an effort to slow down traffic during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up hours. During the pilot, special signs were put up on those roads and enforcement was increased to test its ef-

fect on slowing traffic in the area. Other methods may be tested in the future.

“We were happy with the results of the program,” said Carrie Sanders, a transportation planner with the City’s Department of Public Works. “We had looked at national examples for a creative approach to reducing speeds around schools. Research has shown that once the traveling speed goes below 20 miles per hour, injuries decrease. Establishing the 15 miles per hour speed zones have proven effective in other jurisdictions, which is why we adopted the program.”

To assess potential speed reduction in pilot program zones, traffic studies were conducted over several days in January, March and May. The studies revealed that speeds were reduced overall in the slower speed zones, with the afternoon times showing the greatest decrease.

The pilot program will continue during this school year after testing a variety of methods to slow traffic, the City will determine the most effective option and its ability to be expanded City wide. ■



A 15-mile-per hour sign is stationed in front of Meadow Hall Elementary School to help slow drivers and make streets safer for students.

## King Farm ‘Farmstead’ Heading Historic

The King Farm has long been part of the Rockville area’s history. Soon, the City of Rockville will designate the significant remaining part of the farm as “historic.”

The developer of the King Farm community that is located west of Route 355 and south of Shady Grove Road dedicated the family residence, the large double dairy barn and several farm-related buildings to the City after it took possession of the entire property. Rockville’s King Farm Parks Master Plan adopted in 1999 recommended retaining the buildings on the eight-acre “Farmstead Park.”

A task force asked to study future uses of the site made recommendations to use the park as a historic arts and recreation center, although some of the buildings were in poor condition. The task force conclusion said, “Our recommendations are costly, but it is felt that the conversion of the King

Farm Complex from being a dilapidated farm site into a utilitarian historical arts and recreation center is in the best interests of the City of Rockville and its residents.”

Rockville’s Historic District Commission and the City Planning Commission recommended an historic designation for the property.

In August, the Mayor and Council unanimously instructed City staff to pursue a historic designation on the entire park, which will strengthen efforts to preserve it. A final vote on designation is expected on Sept. 18.

Although the City has provided initial funding for the revitalization of the farmstead park through its future Capital Improvements Program budget, still to be addressed are issues such as how the park will develop, how will it be operated and how will this future park be funded. ■

“...the conversion of the farm complex into a utilitarian arts and recreation center is in the City’s best interest”

— King Farm Task Force



Above is a familiar sight for those who drive on Frederick Road. The large barn that was used by Thompson’s Dairy, which is on the site of the King Farm community, is among the buildings being considered for historic designation.



*Design of a sidewalk for Lynch Street near Beall Avenue is underway. Funding for the sidewalk project is being sought from the state and other sources.*

Photo Credit: Kin Lai

## Stream Enhancements Protect Environment And City Infrastructure

The restoration of Rockville streams and creeks may not seem to impact residents as would a new school or traffic light. However, the recent enhancements at the Watts Branch Watershed in Woottons Mill Park by Rockville's Department of Public Works protected the neighborhood infrastructure and the surrounding environment during the historic June rainstorms.

The storms, which produced more than 10 inches of rain in the span of four days, caused damage in Rockville and throughout the Washington region. Nevertheless, the improved stream at Woottons Mill passed the test.

"Despite the deluge of rain, we noticed the stream restoration prevented unwanted objects from entering the watershed," said Susan Straus, chief engineer for Rockville's Department of Public Works. "I believe that the stream banks would have eroded more had the stream stabilization and restoration project not been implemented. This would have resulted in more soil being washed into Watts Branch. Sediment is the most significant pollutant in Watts Branch."

At Watts Branch, the City has been able to reap the benefits of 4,400 feet of stream restoration that were completed earlier this year. Stream restoration improves the structure, function and self-

sustaining behavior of a stream system, reverses stream degradation and fosters healthier aquatic habitats.

Stream restoration activities include removing artificial watershed disturbances that are causing stream instability; planting structures and vegetation to protect streambanks and habitats; and reshaping or replacing unstable stream reaches with appropriately designed stream channels and floodplains.

The stream improvements have multiple benefits including: stopping unwanted objects — such as trees — from being washed away into the waters and protecting City infrastructure.

The Watts Branch project is one of several similar stream programs in the City.

In September, Rockville will begin a stream restoration program along the Rockcrest Tributary at Ardenne and Aleutian avenues. Moderate erosion along the stream through Rockcrest Park requires stabilization and spots along the stream will be stabilized to protect the adjacent trail, basketball court and private properties.

Fliers have notified residents in the area of the presence of heavy machinery and possible relocation of several walkways. A similar project is planned for the stream in nearby Alsace Lane in September. ■

— by Kin Lai

## Safe Steps: Two Streets Getting New Sidewalks

For the past five years, Rockville has been working to implement the Mayor and Council's pedestrian safety initiative by "filling in missing links" in sidewalks around the City. Residents living near Calvin Lane and Lynch Street will soon be seeing these improvements as sidewalk construction is due to start this month.

Rockville's Department of Public Works established priority areas where sidewalk construction is most needed by focusing on locations close to schools or major activity centers. Calvin Lane was chosen because it leads to Meadow Hall Elementary School and because it is one block from Calvin Park. Lynch Street is located near Beall Elementary School.

"I lobbied for sidewalks on Calvin Lane because I felt they were necessary for the safety of the children who were walking to and from Calvin Park and Meadow Hall Elementary," said Harry Thomas, former president of the Twinbrook Citizen's Association. "I wanted to make sure the children had a safe and contiguous sidewalk for them to walk on so they no longer had to walk on the dangerous streets."

The City has sought to include the community in every step of the sidewalk planning process. After the City received requests from residents for sidewalks on

Calvin Lane and Lynch Street, residents on both streets were invited to meetings to review many aspects of the plans, including: alignment of the sidewalk, what side of the street the sidewalks should be placed and placement of the sidewalk in relation to yards and preservation of trees.

Construction on both Calvin Lane and Lynch Street is scheduled to begin the week of Sept. 5 and is expected to take two to three weeks to complete, weather permitting. The sidewalk on Calvin Lane will be between Gladstone Drive and Dean Drive. Twenty-six trees will be removed to make way for the sidewalk, but the city plans on planting 30 trees as replacements.

Construction on Lynch Street will be located between Anderson Avenue and Beall Avenue. Seven trees will be removed during this process, but seven will be planted in their place.

"We try to maintain all access to the streets during sidewalk construction," said Katherine Kelly of Rockville's Department of Public Works. "The streets will never close down, but people could experience some delays."

For more information about Rockville's sidewalks program, call 240-314-8500. ■

— by Dana Kinker



*Enhancements to Watts Branch in Woottons Mill Park helped protect nearby houses from being affected by stream erosion during heavy rains. The project renovated 4,400 feet of stream to stabilize and restore it.*

Photo Credit: Kin Lai

## Work Progressing at Mattie Stepanek Park

Anyone who has seen the wide open field of, well, dirt in northern King Farm should rest assured that the images of playing children, running dogs and sports teams will soon occupy the space that will become Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park.

Stepanek Park will encompass 26.3 acres of the King Farm community. Expected on the land will soon be an open field, playground, basketball and tennis courts and the much anticipated dog park.

Currently, the grading of the land is taking place, which follows the lengthy infrastructure phase that is now completed. Through the fall, the City will begin planting, seeding, installing playground equipment, finishing one area of parking and completing the dog park, which will be located along Pleasant Road.

"Although the delay in park con-

struction due to the redesign of Pleasant Road was disappointing, it was a blessing in disguise," said Jerry Daus, parks and facilities development manager for the City. "During the developer-funded redesign process, the architect shifted the dog park to the east of Pleasant Road to allow for full traffic movement in and out of the dog park, rather than the restricted access of the original Gaither Road location. Also, the physical separation of the dog park from the park proper will be an advantage to those who like to play in the grass areas."

The park is named for the poet and peacemaker who died in June 2004, a month before his 14th birthday. Mattie, who lived at King Farm with his mother, Jeni, lived a remarkable life. He wrote books of poetry that made the *New York Times* bestseller list before succumbing to a rare form of muscular dystrophy. ■

## Pond Plan for College Gardens To Be Discussed

A public meeting to discuss future plans for the College Gardens stormwater management pond will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 21, in the Carnation Room of the Rockville Senior Center at 1150 Carnation Drive.

Creating a much-needed stormwater pond in the College Gardens neighborhood has been the subject of study for years. Several alternatives have been considered, but research and a consensus of area residents have determined that the best option is to convert the current pond in College Gardens Park into a stormwater pond.

At the upcoming meeting, a stormwater management consultant and a park designer will join City staff in discussing possible park and pond configurations

that would include a stormwater facility. Input from area residents will be welcome.

The stormwater facility is needed to control runoff during major storms. A stormwater facility will help prevent flooding of homes along the stream and also will help prevent erosion along the stream. As part of this project, the City will be redesigning and updating the park.

Earlier this year, area residents were surveyed about which park amenities are the most desirable. This information, along with public input, will be used to determine the best configuration of the park and pond.

For more information about the College Gardens stormwater project or the upcoming meeting, call 240-314-8105. ■